



What people think,  
feel and do

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# The Political Report

## 15th July 2020



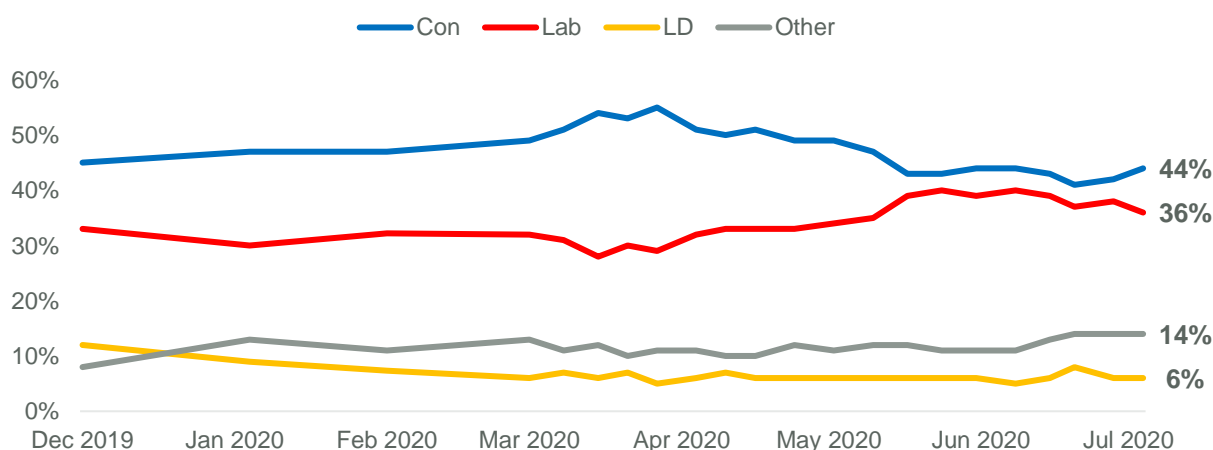
From the Opinium/Observer polling series

17<sup>th</sup> July 2020

## One-minute takeaway

- Conservative lead widens to 8 points over Labour and approval of government's handling of Covid improves to a net rating of -5, the best since mid-May.
- 71% of adults in England support making face masks mandatory in shops and supermarkets vs. 13% opposed. Support is uniform across parties and age groups
- 64% of all UK adults say they are an effective way to contain the virus
- 54% say that face masks are mainly to prevent the person wearing it accidentally infecting others and 30% say that it's a mix of that and preventing other people infecting them. Just 8% believe face masks are mainly to protect the person wearing them
- Currently only 49% wear a mask when going to the supermarket (36% wear it all the time, 13% only if there are people around), 45% when going to shops (again, 13% only if people are around)
- When various amenities re-open, hairdressers are the big winners with 39% ready to go as soon as possible, higher than any other amenity. 23% say the same for pubs and bars and 27% for restaurants
- 55% support the government's decision to remove Huawei from the UK's telecoms infrastructure and 57% agree that the security risks outweigh the potential economic benefits of including them. However, 66% expect Chinese retaliation against British companies in China

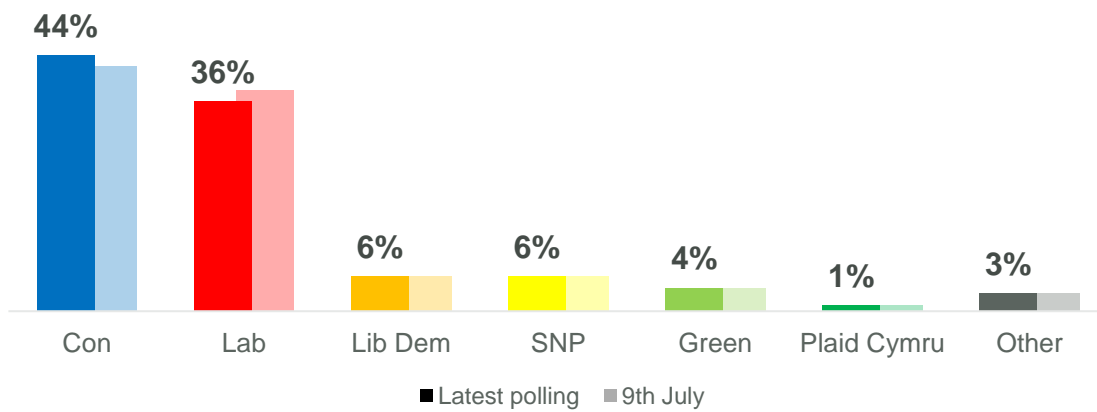
### Voting intention since the 2019 general election



# Headline voting intention

## Tory lead expands to 8 points

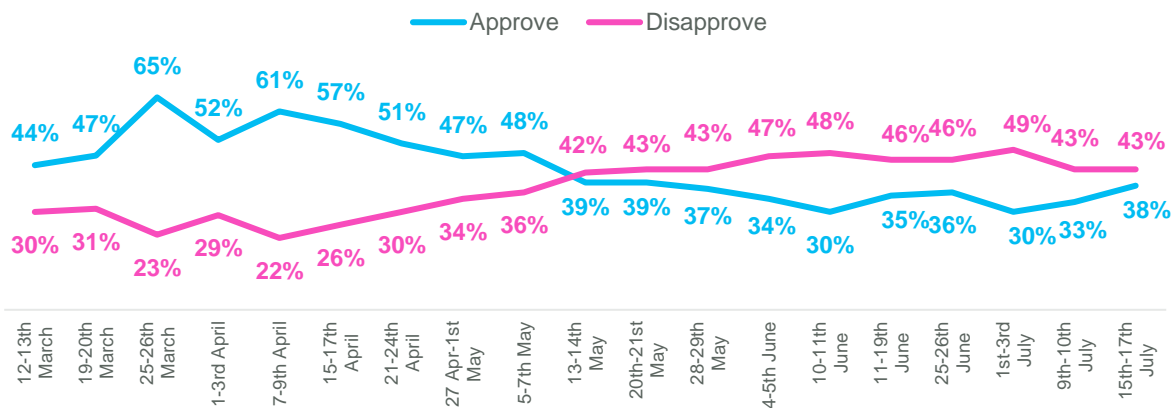
The Conservatives have gained two points while Labour have lost two, taking the overall Tory lead from 4 points to 8. All other parties remain unchanged on last week with the Lib Dems and SNP on 6% each and the Greens on 4%.



# Covid-19 crisis

## Approval of the government's handling edges continues to improve

Approval of government's handling of the crisis



From a record low at the beginning of July, approval of the government's handling of the pandemic has continued to improve. The first major change came last week when disapproval dropped from 49% to 43% and this week the percentage approving has jumped from 33% to 38%.

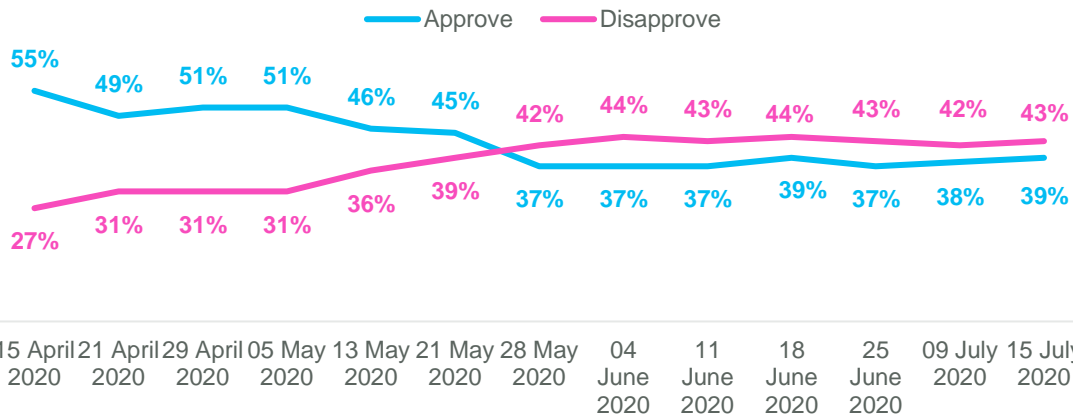
This takes the net approval level from -10 to -5 compared to -19 at the beginning of July, giving the government its most positive rating since mid-May.

# Leadership ratings

## Johnson remains steady while Starmer dips slightly

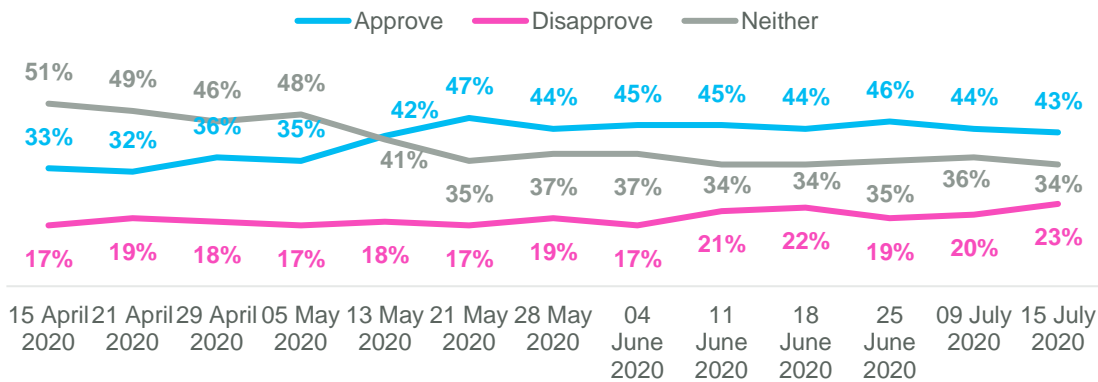
Boris Johnson's approval rating remains just underwater with 39% approving and 43% disapproving. His net rating remains at -4.

**Boris Johnson's approval rating since leaving hospital**



Keir Starmer remains firmly in positive territory but a slight uptick in the percentage disapproving of his job performance reduces his net rating from +24 to +20.

**Keir Starmer's approval rating since becoming Labour leader**



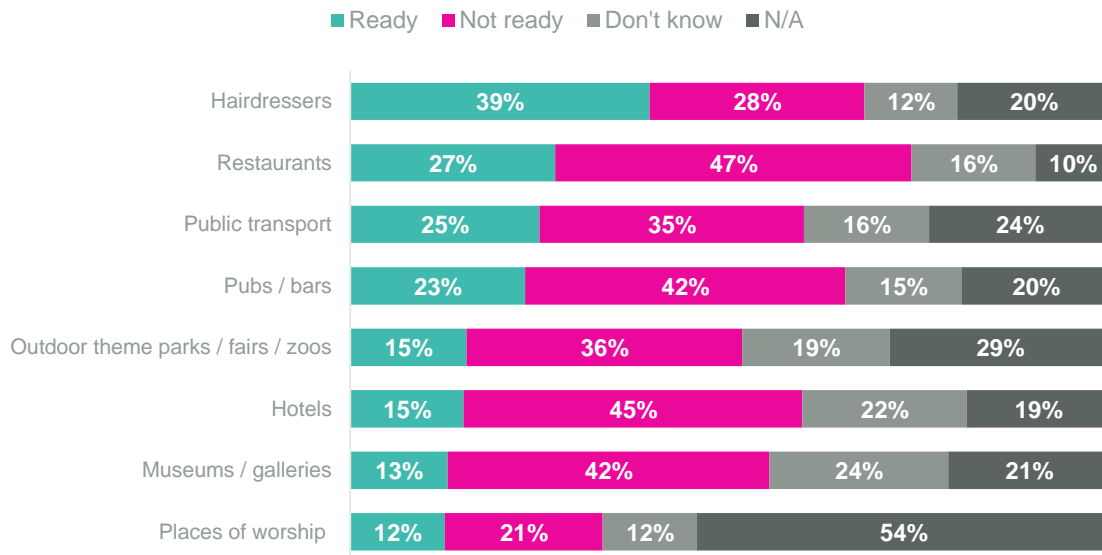
On the question of who would be the best prime minister, Johnson and Starmer remain close with 36% choosing the incumbent, 34% choosing the Labour leader and 17% answering "none of these".

# Living with Coronavirus

## If you open it, will they come?

Now that pubs, restaurants, hairdressers and shops are re-opening, we asked whether people would feel comfortable visiting them to determine whether there was pent up demand held back only by lockdown or whether people still feel cautious going out with the pandemic still raging.

### When do you plan to visit these places



In the chart above, “ready” includes “already visited”, “this weekend” and “as soon as possible after this weekend”. “Not ready” includes “later this year once it’s safe” and “only once a vaccine is in place”.

Visiting the hairdresser is the main amenity British adults are willing to brave coronavirus for and while pubs, restaurants and public transport all feature, they all see as many people unwilling to risk it as willing.

## Strong support for mask mandate

### Most believe masks are effective and should be mandatory in shops and supermarkets

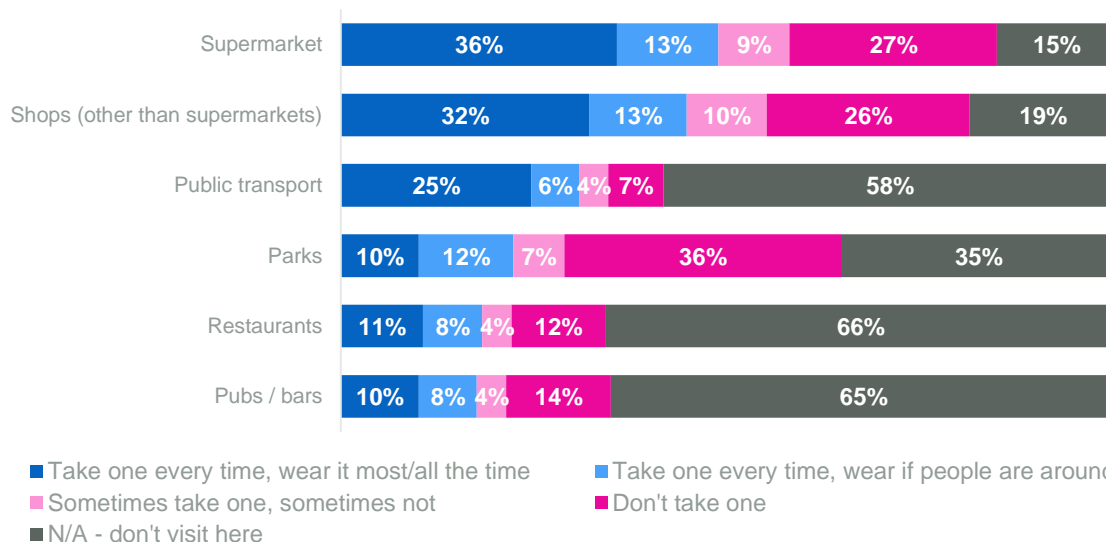
The announcement that face masks are to be mandatory in England from later July is strongly supported with most adults in England backing it.

In the UK more broadly, most say that face masks are an effective way to combat the virus and that they understand that the purpose is to prevent accidental transmission of the virus from the wear to others rather than just protect the wearer from other people.

Most of those visiting shops and supermarkets say they already wear a mask and, among those that do not, 80% say that they will do so once they become mandatory.

### Mask use in shops and supermarkets is already strong but not universal

Do you currently wear face coverings / masks in any of the following places?



In supermarkets, shops and public transport, most of those visiting are taking masks and wearing them while in parks most are not.

The proportion who are inconsistent about taking a mask is relatively small while those not currently taking masks are a substantial minority.

Among those who do not currently take a mask to supermarkets however, 60% say they definitely will once it becomes mandatory and 20% say they probably will.

## What are masks for?

A question about face mask use in public has been whether they are effective in preventing the wearer becoming infected or more to protect other people from any infection the wearer may have. When we ask people directly, most believe the latter is the case:

### Are masks to **prevent me getting infected** or **prevent me infecting other people**?



- Completely to prevent me getting infected
- Mostly to prevent me getting infected
- About as much of either
- Mostly to prevent me infecting other people
- Completely to prevent me infecting other people



## Most believe masks are effective at preventing spread of infection and support making them mandatory

### Are masks **effective** or **ineffective** in reducing the spread of the virus?

■ Very effective ■ Quite effective ■ Not very effective ■ Not at all effective



Most believe masks are an effective way to reduce the spread with agreement being uniform across parties.

Among those in England, 71% support mask wearing becoming mandatory in supermarkets and shops with just 13% opposed

- Again, support is uniform across parties with 73% of Conservative voters and 78% of Labour voters supporting it

49% say that face masks being mandatory would make them more confident in visiting shops

- Again, there is no partisan split with 50% of Conservative voters and 52% of Labour voters agreeing

69% say this move should have been made earlier vs. 11% saying it is happening at the right time and 4% that it is happening too soon.

# Views on Huawei

## China is seen as a threat and the risks of banning Huawei are seen as worth it

When asked which countries posed the biggest threat to the UK, China comes top of the list with 38% vs. 19% for Russia, 12% for the United States and 5% for North Korea.

59% describe themselves as “concerned” or “very concerned” when shown information about the debate over whether including Huawei in the UK’s 5G infrastructure was safe. The exact text was:

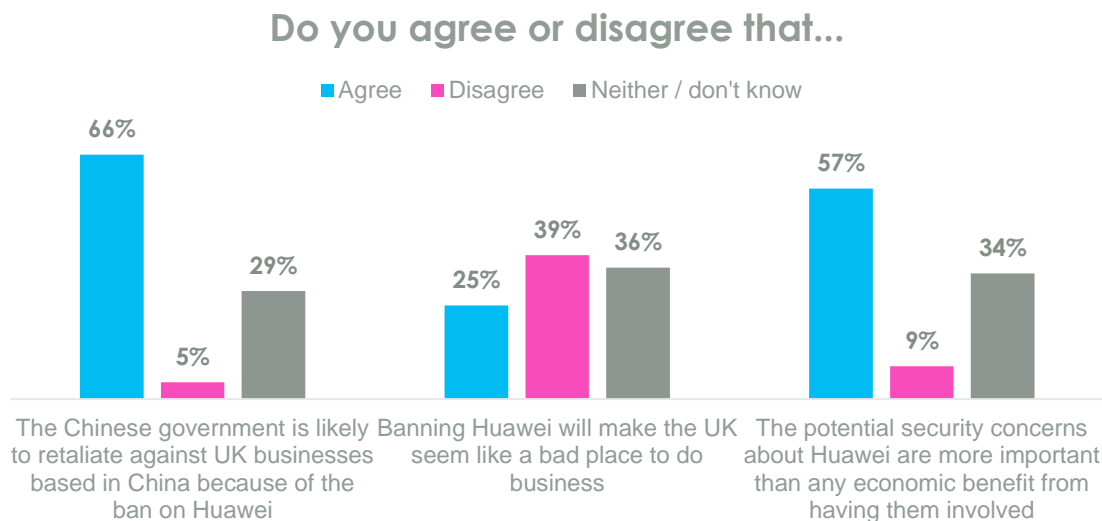
*In January the Chinese communications company Huawei would be cleared to help build the latest generation of mobile broadband internet (5G) that will massively increase internet speeds in the UK.*

*There has since been some debate about the role of Huawei in building the network. Other countries such as the US said there are security risks to using Huawei technology while the UK’s National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) originally concluded that any risk posed can be managed.*

*How concerned are you about any potential security risks posed by using Huawei in building our new 5G internet network?*

**55%** of UK adults support the UK government’s ban on UK mobile providers buying new Huawei 5G equipment after the end of this year and removing all components from their networks by 2027.

Similarly, when we test agreement or disagreement with statements, 57% believe that the security risks of Huawei outweigh the economic benefits:



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